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Russian City as a Philosophical Category of Urban Studies

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Abstract

The article evaluates the present state of Russian cities. Urban studies interpret urban space philosophically. A city is seen as a unique world of modern personality and society development. The author surveys the city typology in Russia, determines specific life features of urban population in different types of cities. The progress of the urban space influences the level of Russian society development as a whole. It determines its achievements and prospects. Russian city is a unique phenomenon. It forms the image of the country by a set of criteria that are defined in the article. Provincial towns, industrial centers and megacities contribute to the features of Russian urbanization in the contemporary period. The standards of living, the pace of industrial and post-industrial development, the vectors of spiritual evolution of cities define the philosophical idea of the Russian urban space.

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1. Introduction

The life of the largest part of modern people is correlated with urban space. Social reality is constructed through the prism of urbanism and urban features. The study presents theoretical categories of Russian cities. Urban everyday life, its analysis, priority of urban practices, trends of urban transformations is of great interest in social and philosophical spheres. The article reveals the typology of urban space in Russia from a philosophical point of view. The work aims to find out the features of the Russian city as a phenomenon of social life. Features of Russian cities are unique. The majority of them developed during the medieval period of history. Cities have always been playing the role of administrative, military, cultural and economic centers of the state. Such specialists as historians, culturologists, economists, sociologists, political scientists and philosophers have been studying this features for

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many years. Philosophical researches concentrate on city space, city daily incidents and cities classification. A city is a structure consisting of society life, interpersonal relations, infrastructure components, regularities of development, vital the practician, micro and macro - country spaces. Philosophical approach to urbanistic processes allows outlining wide modernization of the country, its achievement and contrast.

2. Objectives, methodology and research design

The aim of the research is to analyze the classification of the Russian city, to define the features of philosophical approach as applied to Russian urbanistics.

Methods of philosophy are theoretical. In this research, a complex of social and humanitarian methods was used: a systematic approach, the method of historical parallels, social and philosophical vision of the task. The study was conducted in several stages, having been started in 2003.

The analysis of small Russian towns had been carried out from 2003 to 2006. It included the research of the spheres of life of residents of small towns. The comparative characteristic of towns during different historical periods: Imperial Russia, the towns of the Soviet period and the modern towns of Russia was presented. The complex of advantages, problems and prospects of development of country towns was revealed as well. The analysis of life of the industrial centers of Russia had been carried out from 2006 to 2011. The analysis of the Russian megalopolises has been carried out from 2012 to 2015. The disbalance of the vital space of big cities residents is the current subject of research. A comparative characteristic of all types of the Russian cities is also carried out at present. Each stage was correlated with the consideration of the type of urban space. Thus as the result of the research the philosophical basis of the classification of the Russian cities was provided. The typical traits of the city population development, daily city life, dilemmas, achievements and contradictions of the city life of different kinds were presented as well.

3. Discussion of the research outcomes

Russia is a country of contrasting levels of urban development. Modern city is a socio-economic and sociocultural achievement indicator of the era, reflecting many contradictions of society. The features of urban development firmly make up the specifics of many branches of philosophical knowledge. City is a sociocultural phenomenon of urbanization, integrating social ties and cultural potential of the society. A special place is occupied by the issues of spiritual development in the cities. Russian education, science, art, religion predominantly found a basis in Russian cities that have become cultural, intellectual centers of the country.

The critical years of post-Soviet period in Russia contradictorily influenced the lives of the capital, cities and provinces. In Russia there is still a prevalence of small towns. The development of industrial centers goes in a controversial way. Cities inherited many directions of their development from the previous era, determined the historical fate of Russia and prospects of its development in modern times.

The main areas in the study of the life of modern Russian cities in the philosophical sense are the relationship between typology of cities and aspects of living arrangement. Also the nature, questions of social mobility, the dynamics of economic development, globalization trends, sociocultural features of the transformation of the urban world, the prospects of urban development are under study here.

4. Typology of Russian cities

Large areas of our country are occupied by different cities. Typology of Russian cities varies. Let us consider urban space areas depending on the amount of population. In modern Russia there is a tendency to allocate the metropolitan areas, large industrial centers and small provincial towns. Within the framework of these characteristics we can judge on the peculiarities of life, mentality, sociocultural features of the Russians.

4.1. Provincial towns of Russia

There is a great amount of small towns of the country. A significant portion of Russian population lives in them. Russia accounts for about 1,100 of such cities. Small towns of modern Russia are widely spread administrative-territorial entities. Accordingly, to review the life of a provincial town community is to understand the meaning of Russian everyday life, outlook of the majority of the Russian population.

Specificity of modern small towns is small population, traditional look of buildings, collectivism of citizens in solving common problems. Provincial town is one of the elements of Russian civilization. Understanding of a provincial town is revealed in opposition to a capital. It is believed that Russian history is based on the facts of life of the provincial towns. Small towns are far from the center of the country. They are not subject to intensive influence of the turbulent life of big cities. The population does not exceed 100 000 people. Provincial mentality stores the traditions of the people. Philosophical explanation of the category of "a provincial town" is focused on understanding of a small settlement structure, referred to as the "a town", where the identity of Russian people, their correlation with a particular community and the way of life different from megacities take place.

In the process of socio-cultural development each city takes its place in the historical and cultural traditions of the nation. A typical feature of provincial town development is locality. Dmitry Zamyatin (2001, p. 144) notes that "each culture creates its own represented images of geographical space". The factor of geographical remoteness from the center, natural conditions, climate, landscape, vegetation determine the specificity of the material and spiritual culture of small towns and influence the way of life of the inhabitants, their creative tendencies. This locality has become a value expressed in folk art, art crafts. Folklore, works of the masters of Palekh, Mstera, Zhestov, Fedoskin, Rostov filigree, Vologda lace and other phenomena of folk art became "brands" of the country on the international level. Locality of this art creates a unique artistic image of Russia. The realities of the XX century preserved the culture of provincial cities, which is a timeless value.

In any society there is a dynamic correlation of tradition and innovation. The source of the cultural dynamics of the province is usually creative people - educators, leaders of the local culture. Therefore, in a particular social environment a high social status of people with creative abilities is supported. However, there is a problem of cultural confrontation. It lies in the fact that not every creative innovation can be integrated into a socio-cultural environment. To be more exact, any innovation is doomed to oblivion or temporary position, if it does not meet any understanding from the provincial society. Many provincials often turn to their cultural heritage, trusting it more than innovations. Life of provincial cities appears as context culture. The principle of catch-up of Russia's modernization, having a Western society as a model, is not always successfully implemented because of the regional diversity of the country. Therefore provincialism is opposed to globalization. Russian provincial towns are a basis preserving national identity.

Modernization in the provincial towns of Russia is rather slow in the XXI century. Agriculture, forestry, light and food industries are developed in them. Modernization in the provincial towns suffers due to the lack of high quality of media environment; the other reason is that modern industry is disappearing or is not developed at all. Financial problems, the outflow of population to large cities have worsened the life of small towns.

The problems of the XX century are reflected in the specifics of the urban space of Russia. Most small towns have become "black social holes" on the map of Russia. Entire regions of the Russian Federation have lagged behind in their development in comparison with the other regions and countries. There is a reduction of the indigenous population in many small towns. Society is stratified by economic characteristics that affect social and spiritual ties and relations.

The provincial town life in Russia includes special housing conditions of the Russians. People have private garden plots and cottages growing vegetables and fruits. A daily routine of provincial towns is not ideal in terms of comfort, accessibility to modern life benefits. Provincial people themselves are unpretentious. Today most of them live in the conditions that do not always correspond to basic household criteria: for example, there should not be less than 12 m² of living space per person. Such flats don't have all the amenities.

To get an idea of the life of Russians living in small towns, it's not enough to describe some of its domestic spheres. It's necessary to understand what the common needs of the daily life of population are, what the ideal model of life in the minds of Russians is and how this model is implemented in practice. The most important spheres of life

for the majority of our fellow citizens have become family, friends, work, leisure and religion. The peculiarity of Russian towns is a unique pace of life, good ecology, psychology of provincials, content with the existing benefits and opportunities. Russian provincial town are unique. They are characterized by melancholic mood of their inhabitants and their decisiveness in terms of everyday problem solving in relatively harsh living conditions.

4.2. *Industrial centers*

The life of big cities, industrial centers demonstrate many important aspects of the development of Russia. Socio-demographic processes in them are expressed much evidently. Economic relations are developed in a more dynamical way. Political phenomena appear to be more diverse. In modern Russia, cities are usually regional centers or one-company cities based on an industrial enterprise which is a dominant local employer. Often cities are called industrial centers, if their population is of some hundred thousand people. The specificity of life in industrial centers is the existence of marginal populations there. Industrial facilities, promising work opportunities attract people with the possibility of a better life. Under the influence of migration processes there is a change of social relations at all levels of the urban social structure. However, population growth is not connected with technological progress, as migrants conduct extremely consuming lifestyle on the new territories. "One of the features of migrants is the loss of their former environment, the previous system of moral values, as well as search and acquisition of a new identity to replace the lost one. A huge role here is played by primary groups - family, friends, acquaintances. However, migrants' environment is very specific - they are marginal people with a similar loss of identity and moral principles. Therefore, the crime situation is particularly difficult in areas of their settlement. Statistics shows a constant growth of offenses and burglaries in particular" (Solodyankina, 2002, p. 160).

The consequences of migration are contradictory. On the one hand, it leads to a redistribution of labor and on the other hand, it creates social problems, which are represented by three groups: social justice, rational organization of economic life and the safety of life in the city.

Many industrial centers of our country are monotowns. Their development is connected with one company or group of companies of the same industry. Oleg Roi (2012) notes that all company towns account for almost 40% of Russian cities and are the home to 23% of the urban population. "According to the data provided by Independent Institute of Social Policy, in our country there are only 150 - 160 one-company towns which are economically competitive. In other cities which once had the status of monotowns, the former town-forming enterprises no longer play a decisive role in the city's economy" (Roi, 2012, p. 5). The life of industrial centers of Russia is often characterized by its socio-economical problems. At the beginning of the XXI century, many enterprises were state subsidized and it caused a lot of problems in the life of the citizens. In order to remedy the situation the government worked out a strategy of development of the "fading" cities. One of the aid programs was the project "Relocation", providing citizens with the opportunities to move to other cities, to find a new place of work as well as with the possibility of preferential mortgage lending (Nevinnaya, 2010). Also, in life of monocities business and based on it new social and cultural development vectors are being actively implemented.

A variety of successful modern cities in Russia can be called industrial parks. Industrial Park is a territory specially organized to accommodate new industries, providing them with energy sources, infrastructure, necessary administrative and legal facilities and managed by a specialized company (Yashina, 2011). The location of Russian industrial parks depends on the market outlets, concentration of population, transport infrastructure, etc. Most industrial parks are located in the European and the southern parts of Russia.

Since the industrial revolution of the XIX century in Russia the big cities have been areas of ecological trouble. The relationship of the natural and man-made environments in Russian cities seems contradictory. As a rule, many industrial centers develop by means of core enterprises. That's why it's practically impossible to abandon the sources of environmental contamination. However, modern society is trying to develop a program of activities making industry development not so harmful. In the 80s of the last century, WHO European Regional Bureau proposed a project "Healthy Cities". In 1987 the first network "Healthy Cities" appeared in Europe. Today "Healthy Cities" is an international movement that is represented in 1800 cities in 55 countries (Dolgosrochnaya tselevaya programma, 2012). "To maintain ecological balance is only possible through ecology conscious population, by changing needs and coordinating lifestyle with environmental possibilities of the city and the region" (Kolokolchikova, 2009, p.

248-249). Special urban policy based on the technology of urban governance within the frames of environmental consciousness of the society is highly demanded.

At the moment a modern Russian city is a specific phenomenon in its economic, environmental and socio-cultural sense. Common everyday life problems are the hardships of the depression of single-industry towns, ecological problems, marginal populations, problems of employment and contradictions of spiritual development. The directions to solve these problems are multifold. Overcoming of these problems depends primarily on the target program of the city development being developed by the municipality. The quality of urban life is connected with the availability of services and consumer goods, which is impossible without private business investment in the city. Comfort of life of citizens, the scope of work and leisure activities are provided by core enterprises. Support of major industries which are the priority for the city is a task to be solved on the federal level. Without a comprehensive and strategic planning of life of industrial cities in our country prosperous life of citizens is not possible. On the basis of this approach, all the industrial centers of Russia are divided into progressive and depressed, the latter of which holds significant positions.

4.3. Russian Megapolises

Megapolis is considered to be a big city which appeared as a result of a union of a great number of neighboring settlements. Cities with population exceeding 1mln people are customary called megapolises. Denis Vizgalov (2013) noted that there are 13 megapolises in Russia: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Samara, Yekaterinburg, Ufa, Kazan, Volgograd, Perm, Chelyabinsk, Omsk and Rostov-on-Don.

The study of Russian megapolises in the context of the world processes of globalization, urbanization, post-industrialization is a new format of modern philosophical knowledge. From the second half of the XX century till the beginning of the XXI century there were drastic changes in politics, economy, science and technology. It produced a controversial impact on the life of the society. One of the world tendencies is population increase of cities. Russian megapolises are the largest administrative, political, economical, social and cultural regional centers with the population exceeding 1mln people. Urban population rate of growth surpasses the rate of growth in the country as a whole. Such cities significantly influence general time history of the state.

Megapolis is a modern city. It tends to acquire the features of an ideal space. Every Russian megapolis has its own peculiarities which differ it from the others. These unique features are determined by the history of the city development. Russian megapolis is an innovative settlement with great health care, media, education, trade, transport, electric power, construction, ecology, consumer service facilities. A megapolis as a world pattern is a city affordable for all, comfortable for all, a city in which people live in comfort. Megapolis should meet the demands of every population category, include any cultural tendencies, to be formed to any social, economical and political alternatives (Kasatkina, 2013, p. 56-63). However, do Russian million-plus cities correspond to this ideal image?

Life in Russian megapolis runs in the conditions of a limited space and a lack of its own natural resources. Such cities have a great administrative and intellectual potential. This determines their post-industrial vector of development. Moscow and St. Petersburg hold the position of the biggest megapolises of the country. The rest of the cities either head Russian Federation subjects or fulfill the functions of powerful industrial centers. Nowadays the programs of innovative development of Russian megapolises are of key importance. Modern trends of city planning are oriented to humanization of cities. In such a city it should be comfortable to live, work, rest, communicate and develop. In our modern megapolises there is an acute shortage of health saving technologies. Many Russian cities are problem territories. Efficient management of public transport, new motorway junctions, highways, transport services are urgent needs of Russian megapolises. In any Russian city or town a housing problem is the one of cost, quality and comfort of the living space.

City space saving is one of priority development areas of megapolis. For instance, in the nearest future in Moscow roads, parking lots, utility network, storage premises will be underground. Underground space development is an urgent need to overcome the problem of space deficit (Lvov, 2009).

Safety of urban environment is a topical problem of Russian megapolis. Nowadays crime prevention, man-made disasters, natural source anomalies don't inspire confidence. Ecological safety of cities is the subject of special attention. There exist different social and ecological problems of a megapolis: air pollution, reduction of green areas,

irrational use of natural resources. A positive social and economical image of a modern Russian megapolis must be formed with the help of industrial enterprises. It is necessary to develop the theory of ecological system management and to implement it to the work of urban enterprises. "Practical realization of ecological system approach to the management of enterprises contributes to their ecologization and stability, as well as to megapolis socioecological image formation" (Yurak, 2011, p. 19).

The project of modernization of the biggest megapolis of the country, Moscow, seems quite optimistic. It's common knowledge that the best world architects have been working on the general plan of "large Moscow" since 2012. According to the most projects in "large Moscow" a large-scale civil construction, building of schools, hospitals, sport centers, etc. is carried out - everything necessary for comfortable living. The authorities emphasized that there wouldn't be any residential areas with monotonous grey black-of-flats in "large Moscow" (Narodnoe mnenie: proekt Bolshoi Moskvyy vpolne realen, 2012).

Thus, the life of Russian megapolis is too far from the image of an ideal harmonious city. Rich cultural and historical potential, intellectual foundation, space informatization, powerful administrative resources, positive economical environment for business development should be considered the advantages of Russian cities of this type. However, the drawbacks are more large-scale. In Russian cities the problem of space humanization isn't solved yet, they aren't comfortable to live in. Housing, ecological problems, transport collapse, low quality of social skills are seen as important problems. Nowadays in Russia there isn't any holistic innovation policy oriented to the problems of development of megapolis which are transpassing to postindustrial development, whereas all the other territories of Russia are at the industrial stage of development. The life of the most progressive Russian cities doesn't seem to be a leading one.

5. Conclusion

Russian cities are unique objects of the world urbanistics. This phenomenon is revealed in the system of the cities of different types. The life of provincial towns which are most common in Russia, is based on agriculture, socio-economical crises, low dynamism of media tendencies and industrial stagnation. Development of industrial centers leads to the average standard of living. In such cities life is more dynamic. However, there exists the problem of provision of urban amenities in them. Ecological problems and dependence on the world financial crises are their most urgent problems. Monocities are divided into progressive and depressed. Life of Russian megapolises is controversial. Such phenomena as suburbanization, megapolization, gentrification reveal specific character of city environment changes. Such cities determine post-industrial factors of Russia development.

The image of any Russian city can be represented by means of universal structures of its daily life, conventions, symbols and semiotics. Russian cities are diverse: ranging from small historical towns to megapolises absorbing the features of a global city. Any Russian town is remarkable for its citizens. Urban life constitutes a part of meaning of life for a Russian citizen.

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